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Media Advisory

CALIFORNIA CONTINUES TO INCREASE IN-HOSPITAL EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING RATES

WHAT: *“Using Data to Drive Change”* state and county fact sheets document dramatic increases in exclusive breastfeeding rates in California hospitals since 2010, and substantial improvements in areas of the state that historically have the lowest rates. The stubborn gap between rates of exclusive breastfeeding and rates of babies who are fed both breastmilk and formula, persists, but is gradually closing as more and more hospitals implement Baby-Friendly policies.

Such policies and movements at the state and federal level are informed by data collected on all new mothers and babies in California hospitals. To continue making progress that will improve the health of mothers and babies post-discharge by changing employment, medical, and social policy, consistent and comparable data on breastfeeding exclusivity and duration are needed.

WHEN: The California WIC Association (CWA) will release the fact sheets at 12:01 AM, October 25, 2016, but reporters can access the state and individual county fact sheets on October 19th. The state and county fact sheets provide specific data, ranking high and low performing hospitals, including exclusive breastfeeding rates for each hospital in individual counties, and comparing each county’s breastfeeding and hospital performance with other California counties.

WHO: *“Using Data to Drive Change”* was co-authored by M. Jane Heinig, PhD, IBCLC, and Jennifer Banuelos, MAS, of the U.C. Davis Human Lactation Center <http://lactation.ucdavis.edu>; and by the California WIC Association www.calwic.org.

WHERE: *Contact Sarah Diaz at sdiaz@calwic.org or 530.750.2280 to access the state and county-specific fact sheets **BEFORE** they are released to the public. After October 25th, go to <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/breastfeeding/hospital-rates-a-reports>

Established in 1992, the California WIC Association (CWA) is a non-profit organization formed by directors of local WIC agencies. CWA represents all entities interested in the operation of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC.) California is the nation’s largest WIC program with 84 local agencies serving approximately 1.38 million participants at 650 local centers.